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WORKPLACE RECRUITMENT


“VOLUNTEER GREATER HAMILTON”

FINAL REPORT OF A ONE-YEAR
PILOT PROJECT

JULY, 1988

Project Coordinator: Sheilagh Hagens
Funded by: The Ministry of Citizenship and Culture





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Final Report of A One-Year Pilot
Project in Workplace Recruitment

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Funded by: The Ministry of Citizenship and Culture

Voluntary Action Centre of
Hamilton and District
1988

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Bell Canada
Cambridge Clothing
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Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce
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Dofasco, Inc.
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Hamilton Spectator
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Sheilagh Hagens

May, 1988

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, in its consideration of the potential to fund volunteer bureaux/centres in Ontario granted support for a one year pilot project to be located in Hamilton.

A workplace recruitment pilot project was just one of many ways in which this funding could have been used. For example, consultation services in volunteer program management and training of managers and volunteers all compete with recruitment and referral for the limited time and resources of volunteer bureaux and centres.

Recruitment was chosen by the Hamilton Voluntary Action Centre for a number of reasons. First, there is a critical shortage of volunteers throughout the province. Second, it was an approach which seemed to be well suited to a time-limited project. Third, as a study, it could capitalize on the Ministry's investment by producing results and recommendations usable throughout the provincial network of volunteer bureaux and centres in subsequent years. Fourth, eliciting support of the business community would have a multiplier effect in extending the resources of this project in order to reach out to the maximum number of prospective volunteers.

There were also good reasons for using the workplace as the target group. First, if we are going to be successful in finding the growing numbers of volunteers needed to keep up with the demand in the human service sector, a new market must be found. Second, the workplace is a large untapped resource of skilled people who have as much to gain as they have to give in volunteering, if the voluntary sector can find ways of accommodating their needs and reaching them with information. Third, workplace recruitment in the United States is highly successful and many similar conditions on the Canadian scene indicate that success can be repeated here.

It was well known from the outset that recruiting from a new target market would not produce dramatic results in one year. However, what was hoped was that we could generate sufficient evidence to support long-term investment throughout the province in workplace recruitment strategies.

The project was an overwhelming success. All indications are that the corporate sector is more than willing to support volunteerism. One hundred per cent of the large businesses approached participated and the penetration begun into medium and small businesses was showing a participation rate of 80% at the end of the project.

One hundred and twelve new volunteers were recruited for community agencies. In addition, hundreds of volunteer hours and donated services were offered to the project itself by the business community.

Two things, however, are urgently needed if the return on this project is to continue to grow.

One, public education. There are many misconceptions in the business sector as well as the general public about the role of the voluntary sector and charitable foundations in service delivery. Many vital services which are being taken for granted will be in jeopardy if volunteers cannot be found to support the work of paid staff.

Two, market research. Some studies have been conducted on people who volunteer. However, little is known about the 75 percent of the adult population which is not presently involved in community work. Anecdotal evidence gathered during the project indicates that simply getting information about volunteering directly to people produces results. However, professional market research must be done to discover the needs and motivations that apply to this large group of people.

The bottom line is money. Volunteer bureaux and centres are themselves charitably based organizations working with a minimum of resources. If they are going to be successful in providing the volume and range of support needed to keep the human service, recreation and cultural sectors thriving, operational funding is needed. Volunteer work is unpaid. But it does not follow that volunteerism is free.

There are options. We can pay directly for services and lessen our dependence on the voluntary sector and charitable foundations. We can provide fewer services. However, some of these, such as service to the elderly, disabled and mentally ill are legitimately seen by society as not expendable. Or we can provide the necessary resources for volunteer centres and bureaux so that they can in turn inject the millions of dollars worth of service into the community.

One thing is clear. With demand for volunteers continuing to grow and outstrip supply, the alternatives are either more funding or fewer services.

INTRODUCTION

A needs assessment survey conducted by the Ontario Association of Volunteer Bureaux/Centres (OAVB/C) in 1986 indicated that Volunteer Centres throughout Ontario were experiencing an increasing demand for volunteers and for operational funding to ensure continued service delivery. In Hamilton, the demand for volunteers rose by 233% over a four year period ending 1986. Similar conditions exist in communities throughout the province.

In light of these statistics and the absence of on-going financial support from the provincial government for the core services provided by Volunteer Centres, OAVB/C requested operational funding for its members to supplement the \$1.2 million in community-based financing raised collectively by Centres each year.

In response, the Ministry of Citizenship & Culture provided funding on a trial basis for a Volunteer Recruitment Pilot Project to be carried out in the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth.

The project involved two major activities:

- A) OAVB/C Discussion Paper on operational funding to Volunteer Centres;
- B) Hamilton Workplace Pilot Project ("Volunteer Greater Hamilton").

1. THE OAVB/C DISCUSSION PAPER ON OPERATIONAL FUNDING

The objectives of the OAVB/C Discussion Paper on Operational Funding were:

- + To identify common services of member Centres which require financial support on an ongoing basis.
- + To identify at least ten factors for consideration in the development of a core funding program.
- + To consider the impact of funding on existing funding sources.

Meetings of the Operational Funding Committee took place over the summer. The Discussion Paper* was submitted to the Ministry on schedule and follow-up between OAVB/C and the Ministry is in process.

* A copy of this report is available from the OAVB/C office (111 Merton Street, Suite 207, Toronto, Ontario. Phone:{416} 487-6139)

I. THE WORK PLAN

A staff person was hired for the year and secretarial support and supervision were provided by the Voluntary Action Centre of Hamilton & District.

The project involved three main types of work: administration, implementation and report preparation.

i) Administration

Administration included activities central to the procedures of the Voluntary Action Centre such as recording of time logs and expense sheets, consultation with program and support staff and monthly staff meetings. By far the largest portion of administration time, however, was spent directly on the project itself. This included general strategy decisions; design and implementation of record-keeping systems; board and committee work including forming and working with an Advisory Committee for the project; and on-going evaluation of the project.

ii) Implementation

Implementation included the conceptual and material planning and implementation of marketing strategies; dialogue with labour representatives; contact and follow-up with employers; and employee follow-up.

a) Marketing activities included: developing strategies; creating promotional materials such as posters, pamphlets, table tents, display board materials, flyers, articles, and television public service advertising; employer contact support materials including an information kit, covering letters and thank you certificates informing employers of who from their workforce has sought volunteer work; speaking engagements and special events.

b) Dialogue with the labour movement centered around attempting to obtain labour endorsement of the project. It included talking with leaders in the labour movement; attending a Labour Council meeting to present our request; labour's presence as an observer on the Advisory Committee; and provision of copies of Volunteer-Union Relations¹ for members of their discussion committee.

c) Employer contact included "cold calls" to Chief Executive Officers of large companies requesting appointments to present the project; direct-mail appeals to medium and small businesses; follow-up visits and phone calls; formation of individualized workplace plans with employers; packaging and delivery of materials; dealing with special requests such as pre-retirement seminars.

¹ Linda L. Graff, Volunteer - Union Relations: A Discussion Paper, a publication of the Voluntary Action Centre of Hamilton & District, November, 1983.

d) Employee contact included speaking with visitors at the on-site information/recruitment tables, placement assistance and placement development for individuals or groups with special requests.

iii) Preparation of Reports

An interim report was made in December to the Executive Director, the Board of Directors of the Voluntary Action Centre, and the project Advisory Committee, and to the OAVB/C Board of Directors in February to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project.

Collation of statistics, consultation with a marketing instructor from the McMaster University Business Certificate program and final report writing were begun in April.

At the beginning of the project, the following workplan was established:

WORKPLACE RECRUITMENT PROJECT WORKPLAN

Time Frame - May 11, 1987 to May 13, 1988

Phase One - Research

May - June.

Literature Search
Demographics of Hamilton Business Community

Phase Two - Project Plans and Marketing Strategies

June -Sept.

Establishment of Advisory Committee
Sanctions/Endorsements - Labour Council
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Mayor
 - Regional Chairman
Marketing and Promotional Strategies
Selection of Target Employers
Provision for Impact on the Voluntary Action Centre
 - Placement Assistance

 - Placement Development

Contacts with Employers and Employees

Oct. - Apr.

Initial Contact with Employers - Large Business &
Developing Individual Workplace Plans

Oct. - Dec.

Campaign to Banking Community

Jan. - Apr.

Direct Mail Campaign - Medium & Small Business

Jan. - Apr.

.

WORKPLACE RECRUITMENT PROJECT WORKPLAN (CONTINUED)Phase Three - Results and Statistics

Apr. - May

Marketing Evaluation
Recruitment Statistics and Projections
Employer Information
Agency Statistics - Number & Type Receiving Referrals

Phase Four - Wrap-up

Apr. - May

Report Preparation
Thank You Letters to Employers
Names of Recruits to Employers
Recommendations to Voluntary Action Centre

II. PHASE ONE - RESEARCH

A LITERATURE SEARCH

The literature search yielded a wealth of information and statistics on corporate programs, recruitment methods and demographics. Several recurring themes provided good information around which to build a marketing plan. In summary:

i) A great deal of public education is necessary in the first year of a program within the business community. The corporate sector can be expected to be unaware of the specific needs of the voluntary sector, how it can help and the benefits it can expect from making a contribution.

ii) 62% of people are have a significant degree of dissatisfaction in their paid work and look for satisfaction elsewhere.

iii) Motivation/need theories, the most familiar of which is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, are particularly pertinent to voluntary action because it offers many social, psychological and self-fulfillment opportunities.

iv) The Exchange Theory, closely tied to motivational theories, suggests that people will only engage in volunteer activity in order to meet desired goals such as recognition, experience, friendship and satisfaction and that these rewards must be greater than the perceived costs.

v) The shift to a high tech society increases the need for touch and interpersonal contact, components of many volunteer positions.

vi) Direct person-to-person contact is the best recruitment tool.

vii) Specific, well-defined requests for volunteers elicit more response than non-specific appeals for help.

Because workplace recruitment is a largely untested phenomenon in Canada, almost all of the literature was based on experiences in the United States. Types of programs and depth of corporate involvement in the U.S. are based on years of groundwork and a long-standing tradition of corporate responsibility in the voluntary sector. Since neither the groundwork nor the tradition exist in Canada, a small survey of Canadian Corporations known to have some interest in volunteerism was carried out. Interviews with other volunteer centres were also conducted to try to determine both the positive and negative factors which could influence the planning and strategy of the project.

A Toronto Board of Trade Study did yield some information about Canadian Corporate attitudes towards volunteerism. While many companies have not yet recognized the benefits of being involved in volunteer activities, and usually limit participation to financial donations and occasional use of resources, interest in corporate volunteerism is beginning to grow. The practice of loaning executives to community organizations is becoming more common although actively encouraging the general workforce to volunteer is still rare.

Companies involved in more extensive programs all report success and intend to retain or expand them. The study concluded that "companies can play a role in helping to staff non-profit agencies with volunteers. In return, substantial benefits flow to the company, the employee-volunteer and the community." ²

B. SURVEY

A mail survey of seven companies that took part in the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto study on "Corporate Involvement in Volunteerism" was carried out. It was hoped that this would provide some useful contacts for the Hamilton area. It was not a helpful step. Companies responded to the survey but were non-committal in terms of providing local contacts or support. In fact, when we began to contact local companies without this support, there was no problem. It would appear that building a relationship directly between local communities and local companies is more successful than attempting to get the corporate level in another city to take part or lend endorsement.

C. PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH THE TORONTO VOLUNTEER CENTRE

The Toronto Volunteer Centre's "Corporate Challenge" is a workplace focussed program aimed at slow, in-depth penetration of large corporations. Interviews with staff yielded some valuable information.

Of considerable interest was the fact that they sell their services on a consulting basis to very large corporations and package it as both a public relations activity for the corporation and a fringe benefit for their employees.

Two factors make the dynamics in Hamilton very different:

i) Hamilton is an industrial rather than a corporate city with very few large businesses (over 500 employees) and 80 % of its business sector is small (under 25 employees).

ii) The Hamilton project was a one year "blitz" campaign aimed at engaging the maximum number of workplaces with a minimum of time and resources.

This type of workforce and the time limitations therefore required a very different marketing strategy. However, Toronto's emphasis on service and their pre-retirement focus were useful elements which could be modified for the Hamilton market.

² Corporate Involvement in Volunteerism in the Metro Toronto Area, an information report by the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto, Urban Affairs Department, 1985.

D. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE HAMILTON BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The following statistics are taken from the 1986-97 Hamilton-Wentworth Business Directory. However, the Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area includes Burlington which is not a part of the Region and was not included in the project.

# of large businesses - 1,000+ employees	10
- 500+ employees	8
# of medium-sized businesses - 300 - 499 employees	7
Total labour force (including Burlington)	262,000

E. ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In order to gain as much information as possible on how to access and market to the business community an Advisory Committee of people committed to volunteerism was formed representing the large and small business sectors, the labour movement, not-for profit organizations, the academic community, the United Way and marketing experts. A delegate from the Labour Council agreed to be present as an observer.

The committee met four times between mid-July and mid-September, helping to develop strategy, compile lists of needs and resources, select target workplaces and provide a network of contacts in the large and small business sectors and the academic community.

An evaluation meeting was held in early December to review the Interim Report. At this time, no changes in plans were seen to be necessary. A final meeting was held April 19, 1988 to review the data collected for the final report and discuss suggestions and recommendations that could be forwarded to the provincial government, OAVB/C and the Voluntary Action Centre.

F. ENDORSEMENTS

Labour Council

There was strong feeling throughout the American literature that a successful workplace recruitment program would require the support of labour. A good deal of background reading and groundwork was done in order to fully understand labour's position on voluntary action and to create a setting for open dialogue with the labour movement.

We were given the opportunity to present our project to a Labour Council Executive Meeting. The aim of the project, the "VAC Policy and Practices re Volunteers, Paid Staff and Unions"(see Appendix A) and a request for endorsement of the project by Labour were presented. Although sanction was not granted, a number of encouraging concessions were made. Labour agreed: to strike a committee to discuss a VAC document, "Volunteer-Union Relations: A Discussion Paper" written by Linda Graff, Executive Director of the agency; to attend Advisory Committee meetings on an observer status; to stay in communication with us.

None of the obstacles presented by Labour in the American literature arose. It is impossible to evaluate whether the groundwork done with Labour helped to offset potential problems or whether direct sanction may have made a difference in recruitment statistics. However, it was without doubt a valuable step in the process and one which should be carefully and sensitively addressed in any program which involves unionized workers.

Business & Local Government

Endorsements from the Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor and the Regional Chairman were vital in establishing the importance and scope of the project and giving it the kind of community profile which would attract the respect of the top management level of businesses and corporations.

All were more than happy to provide the requested endorsements for printing in our promotional materials (see Appendix B).

G. IMPACT ON THE VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTRE

Placement Assistance

Heavier than normal placement assistance was needed between January and April and there were a number of requests for evening placement assistance for employees who did not want to be called at their workplace.

Placement Development

Respondents often had a strong sense of what they wanted to do and a great deal of motivation. Some, by the time they were contacted, had already arranged volunteer positions on their own. Others knew what they wanted to do but wanted to know how to get involved. For some with specific interests not corresponding with current positions listed at the VAC, special placements were located or developed.

A placement was also arranged for ten employees of one workplace who wanted to do a one-time group project. Requests from two other agencies for large numbers of people were then developed as group projects and a special piece of promotional material was sent to all companies participating in the project to test group employee response.

III. PHASE TWO - IMPLEMENTATION

A. MARKETING

A.1 The Marketing Challenge

A number of challenges to marketing such a new concept had to be taken into account:

- + The Voluntary Action Centre, because it is itself a not-for-profit agency operating with a very small publicity budget, inevitably has had a low profile in the corporate sector. Therefore, a necessary first step was to introduce ourselves to the business community as an important, competent and effective part of the human service, recreation and cultural network.

- + The implications of the low profile were that in order to get to the target market specified by the parameters of the project, we would first have to market ourselves successfully to the heads of corporations and the business community in general.

- + The time frame was short, especially in light of the facts drawn from research into the American experience.

- + A \$5,000 promotions budget had to cover all marketing activities directed to a working population of 262,000.

- + Within the above constraints, volunteerism, the product which was being marketed, faces strong competition with a whole range of demands and opportunities in peoples' lives. Therefore the marketing concept had to address the needs of individuals and the community in order to offset the competition and overcome resistance to the costs to volunteers in terms of their time and energy.

- + The campaign would be starting in the fall coinciding with the United Way campaign to the corporate sector.

Strategies and activities were designed to avoid competition which might detract from either campaign and where possible, to complement a commitment already made to the United Way. To enhance this, the United Way allowed us to use the phrase "the United Way of people raising". The phrase helped employers to grasp in a few words the concept of the Voluntary Action Centre as a central information and referral agencies on volunteerism for Hamilton's not-for-profit sector. It also helped them to see their participation in "Volunteer Greater Hamilton" as having a multiplier effect on their United Way donations. Thus, the competition, in fact, became a useful selling tool.

The central strategy was to combine a request for help with service to the employer which would offer an exchange of value for value. The relation of business to the voluntary sector and the high return on the investment of time and resources in volunteerism, all well-documented and vital information which had not yet been made available to businesses, was put in an employer kit along with other resources.

Participation in the program needed to be easy, requiring very little time and little or no expense to the company. A wide variety of ways in which companies could take part would be offered so that each workplace could choose a level and method of participation with which it felt most comfortable.

Since this was an innovative project in Canada and Hamilton had been chosen for the pilot study, there was a built-in public relations value to participation which appealed to some businesses.

The larger target market, as defined by the parameters of the project, was "employed people". However, within this group were three sub-markets, largely homogeneous but with small differences which warranted a slightly altered approach: large business, the banking community and small business.

Also, within each of these sub-markets there were two distinct groups which required totally different marketing mixes: the employers, who had to be sold on the program in order for us to be able to reach the employees; the employees themselves.

Whether the employer is seen as merely part of the channel of distribution or as a distinct market is probably academic. The important thing is that the marketing approach to this group was vital to the success of the program.

Establishing the specific target market, which companies and institutions to approach and how, was the next task.

In order to meet the two-fold purpose of the project, to raise volunteers and to produce some data on workplace recruitment, companies were chosen according to the following criteria:

- i) all large companies and workplaces (over 500 employees), in order to reach as large a segment of the working population as possible;
- ii) a cross-section of companies from throughout the Region;
- iii) a representative cross-section of medium and small sized companies;
- iv) a representative cross-section of various blue and white collar workers.

"Customer" or "consumer" needs also had to be established in order to produce a product to which they could respond and would want to respond. Employers and employees have separate though sometimes interrelated needs and therefore separate strategies and materials were required.

Employers have basic needs in relation to both their employees and the community which involvement in volunteer programs can address:

- i) to be, and be seen as, socially responsible;
- ii) good employee morale, workforce stability and productivity;
- iii) to be seen by employees as being interested in their well-being.

Employees, on the other hand, have a mixture of personal and work-related needs which can be met, at least partially, through active involvement in the needs of the community:

- i) flexibility, particularly in relation to time commitments, so that both nine-to-five and shift workers could be accommodated;
- ii) stress reduction, a break from routine, friendship and fun;
- iii) recognition and self-fulfillment;
- iv) skill development and opportunities to try out and evaluate new career directions;
- v) The need for information on volunteering itself such as what it is, how to fit it into a work schedule; what it will cost them, where they can do it, how to choose a position that will suit them.

A.2 The Marketing Mix - The 4 P's of Marketing

i) The Product

A product is, by definition, "the need satisfying offering of a firm"³, usually a blend of goods and services including warranties and instructions but in some cases a service only. Products are classed depending on how customers shop for them. Volunteerism, to the major segment of our target market, is in a small and challenging class known as "unsought goods", i.e. unsought by the consumer. These are products that customers do not yet want or do not know they can "buy".

Although many people do seek out volunteer opportunities on their own initiative, the ones we were trying to reach were those who are not presently volunteering. Although a great deal of market research needs to be done on this group of people in order to identify their specific needs and potential for contributing to the voluntary sector, for the purposes of the study we presumed a lack of information or misinformation to be an inhibiting factor to those who would otherwise volunteer.

Generically, the product can simply be defined as "volunteerism". However, in order to meet the definition of "needs satisfying", the product had to be developed differently for employers and employees.

The product for employers, therefore, included: well-documented information on the benefits of employee volunteerism to the company as well as to the community; information on the human relations value of recognizing employee voluntary efforts and provision of recognition resources; resources for pre-retirement counselling and presentations; easy to use promotional materials; availability of staff for public speaking, interviews and other special events; a range of ways in which companies could participate, allowing them to tailor a plan to their own commitment level and to the needs and resources of their own workplace.

³. E.Jerome McCarthy, Stanley J. Shapiro and William D. Perreault, Basic Marketing, Richard Irwin, Inc., 1986, pp 323-325.

As much customer service as possible was provided throughout the project including writing special articles, producing custom-made posters with pamphlet pockets counting, packaging and labelling kits of information for different employee groups within a company and delivering materials.

Since this was a new target market, the employee product needed developing in order to accommodate their unique needs. In a sense, it could be seen as a whole "line" of products - positions which:

- + offer skill/career development
- + enhance the PR of the company and/or the personal prestige of the person (high profile boards and committees);
- + provide fun, a break from routine and therefore some stress reduction; + require minimal time commitments but which allow the individual the satisfaction of being able to contribute something, however small;
- + one-time events which allow groups of employees the opportunity to socialize away from work and respond to a community need;
- + flexibility which allows groups of employees to take on a commitment and time-share it.

Service to prospective volunteers must also part of the product if they are going to be expected to "buy" it. These services are supplied through the regular programs of the Voluntary Action Centre. People may acquire information on any of the 600 positions available on a self-serve basis by coming in to the centre to scan the volunteer job board and taking away information; by receiving Placement Assistance by phone; or by having a personal Placement Assistance interview with a staff member.

ii) Place

With any unsought good, the product must be placed where the customer is. This is consistent with information throughout the literature which says that direct, face-to-face contact is the most successful in raising volunteers. Therefore, we went directly to employers who then became the "wholesalers" to their employees.

Once employers took on the project, they became the channel of distribution. The project co-ordinator delivered the information and materials and the employer in turn distributed them. This included placing posters and other information on company bulletin boards, distributing pamphlets directly to employees or placing them where they could be easily seen and picked up; reproducing information and articles on volunteering in in-house newsletters; providing space for information/recruitment tables outside of cafeterias staffed by project personnel; providing opportunities for staff to speak to employees.

iii) Promotion

Unsought goods are unique in their heavy dependence on informative promotion and personal selling. This is particularly true when promoting volunteerism to a new target market. Without the information, not only on the rewards and benefits, but also on the dependence of the community on volunteers a request for help will get lost in the sea of requests that come at us every day.

A volunteer centre, because it serves so many community agencies and organizations, is in a unique position. It can offer a co-ordinated way to respond to an overload of requests by helping prospective volunteers define their own needs and strengths and zero in on the contribution that will maximize what they have to give and what they will get in return.

In order to get this information to prospective volunteers and their employers, however, we had to grab their attention.

The first promotional task, therefore, was to develop a distinctive name and logo that incorporated volunteerism plus the geographical area (in this case the region). Since the region was beginning to use the name Greater Hamilton, we decided to use "Volunteer Greater Hamilton" as a "call to action" name for the project and interject the words "for a" in the logo so that it read "Volunteer for a Greater Hamilton", giving the term "Greater Hamilton" a double meaning.

The colour and design were chosen to give it a modern, upbeat and energetic feel. The original concept and the copy writing were produced by project staff and the finished and mechanical art were done by professionals.

The logo was then incorporated into all employer and employee materials and a number of promotional activities were designed to reinforce awareness. These included: articles in "Panorama" (the Chamber of Commerce magazine) and "Let's Talk Business"; interviews on Cable 14 and CHCH; a public service advertisement which runs about twenty times a month on CHCH; articles in the Hamilton Spectator; bus signs; public speaking.

Three co-ordinated promotional pieces were produced: a poster with a prominent phone number, a pamphlet with a self-addressed mail-in card and a fold-over table tent suitable for cafeteria tables, reception desks etc. A fourth item, a recognition button incorporating the logo was also available. (See Appendix C)

"Volunteering - A Great Way to Grow", is used by the VAC to appeal to the general population, many of whom are unemployed and cite a need for work experience or relief from boredom.

However, while stress reduction, a break from routine, fun and friendship are all important components of employee volunteerism, a need for self-fulfillment which many workplaces cannot provide seems to be the major motivator.

Pictures of volunteers in a variety of warm, caring, happy situations were prominent and the major caption read, "You have what they need...Will you help? We'll help you." Small print gave information on how to get involved in volunteering, the benefits and the services offered by the VAC.

In addition, because people are known to respond more readily to specific requests, a monthly listing of "Volunteer Opportunities" which might have special appeal to employed people was produced. Companies either placed them on bulletin boards or reprinted the information in in-house newsletters.

Promotion to the employers included an information kit that addressed their questions and concerns. The kit contained:

- + Endorsements of the project from the Mayor, the Regional Chairman and the President of the Chamber of Commerce.
- + A short description of the project.
- + An outline of the benefits of volunteerism to the company, employee and community.
- + The economic dimensions of volunteer activity.
- + A sample list of charitable organizations.
- + A list of Advisory Committee members (in effect, endorsements from the business and academic community at large).
- + Samples of all promotional materials prepared for employees.
- + A list of ways in which companies could participate. (See Appendix D)

Personal appointments were made by phone with the highest possible level of management in the large companies. The kit presented at a meeting, usually with two or three key executives. At this point personal selling became the crucial promotional tool.

The Chief Executive Officers of banks and trust companies were invited to a breakfast at the Hamilton Club. The agenda included a prominent keynote speaker. The project was presented, kits provided and follow-up phone calls and visits were used to finalize plans. Again, personal selling was very important.

Medium and small sized companies were approached through a direct mail campaign. An article printed in the Chamber of Commerce magazine was included and a covering letter with a fairly strong "sales" flavour accompanied the kit.

Mailings went out at the end of January and follow-up phone calls began about two to three weeks later. Due to the heavy volume of work left from the first two parts of the campaign plus the work contracted with each new company, follow-up was paced to make sure that each assenting company could get the service it wanted within a reasonable time before additional companies were contacted.

Telephone sales replaced personal sales in this segment of the campaign to finalize plans for participation and take orders for promotional materials. The covering letter and the accompanying kit seemed to be an important component in making the telephone contact successful.

Although a direct, face-to-face request is by far the most effective tool in volunteer recruitment, the literature available suggested that this kind of access to employees would be extremely hard to accomplish in the first year of such a new kind of campaign. We therefore had to count on the employer to sell the program to employees. Many added their support to the promotional materials by placing their own notices on bulletin boards, putting articles and announcements in their newsletters or involving employees in committee decisions on how to respond to the project.

iv) Price

Although there is no exchange of money in this case, there are definite costs incurred by both employers and employee volunteers.

Although the program was designed to have minimal employer costs, some employers offered far more than was originally asked of them.

Time: the following are average amounts of time spent for each stage of involvement:

- i) initial contact by phone - explaining the project, answering questions and getting a personal interview - 15 minutes.
- ii) first interview - twenty minutes to one half hour was requested. Employer interest extended these visits to as much as two hours with a one hour average.
- iii) follow-up contact by telephone (most companies wanted to meet with their donations committees and decide on a plan taken from the various options presented) - 15 minutes.
- iv) time was donated to actually implement the program within the company. This is described under staff resources below.

Staff:

- i) Secretarial. The secretary of the CEO was usually put in charge of arranging details. Average secretary time one to two hours.
- ii) Public Relations. A staff member responsible for putting articles, notices etc. into in-house newsletters - one to two hours if the project co-ordinator provided the copy; two to five hours if company staff produced articles and notices.
- iii) Distribution staff - people chosen to be responsible for putting up posters and getting the pamphlets to employees. Methods ranged from stuffing pockets in the specially mounted poster, to insertion in mail-outs and personal delivery by in-house "couriers". In one case this required a two hour lunch meeting with 12 staff to co-ordinate delivery. Distribution time varied from one to five hours. In some cases the project co-ordinator counted and packaged materials for individual departments. In other cases, companies offered to do this on their own.

Donated Services:

Printing

Use of mail room facilities

Money: Some companies reimbursed us for the materials they used and one paid for a luncheon for staff. Direct out-of-pocket expenses voluntarily incurred by companies amounted to \$3,750.

Costs to the prospective employee volunteer are the same as they are for any volunteer:

- i) Out of Pocket Expenses. These can include items such as gas, parking, public transit, food and occasionally child care. Some agencies are in fact able to reimburse volunteers for these costs. U.S. statistics place the mean cost at about \$.30 per hour, reaching a maximum of \$3.00 per hour.
- ii) Energy
- iii) Time
- iv) Opportunity Costs. These include what is foregone, what else a person could be doing with that time, including paid work.

All of these costs have to be considered when packaging a volunteer job. If the "price" is too high in relation to the benefits, volunteers will not stay with the job.

B. RECRUITMENT - A SUMMARY

Marketing and recruitment are inseparable in the business of volunteering. Marketing is the strategy used to attract and enlist people in a program. In this case, two kinds of recruitment were necessary.. Although the problem for which the project was seeking a viable solution was an acute shortage of volunteers, in order to address this problem through workplace recruitment, the recruiting of the companies themselves had to become the primary focus. The actual number of new volunteers is contingent on the level of commitment of the individual companies and is part of the longer range goal.

The goal therefore, was to recruit the companies and provide them with as much support and information as possible so that they could in turn encourage their employees to volunteer. The marketing/recruitment tools and methods used are outlined in detail above and summarized here.

- i) Direct contact with employers who then took on the responsibility for encouraging their employees to volunteer.
- ii) Posters, pamphlets and table tents giving information on the benefits of volunteering and how to get involved.
- iii) Articles in in-house newsletters on the program.
- iv) "Volunteer Opportunities", a monthly column listing current positions available which might have special appeal for employed people. This was either posted on company bulletin boards or reprinted in in-house newsletters.
- v) In-house recruitment/referral tables.
- vi) In-house displays including photographs, volunteer job listings, information on how to get involved and audio-visual displays.

IV. PHASE THREE - RESULTS AND STATISTICS

To a large extent, the project proceeded according to plan. During phase two, printer's errors plus a postal strike in the fall caused some delay.

The preparation phase of this kind of project has many components which are difficult to pin down to tight time frames and it is wise to allow flexibility where possible. To make up for lost time, we eliminated the introductory letter to employers of large companies and went instead to "cold calls" by telephone.

During phase one of the campaign in which large companies were contacted directly, fourteen companies or institutions plus the Chamber of Commerce were approached and all agreed to take part. Since some of these contacts, such as the Region, represented multiple worksites, this total approximated 29 worksites.

Activities included distribution of promotional materials, articles in in-house newsletters, agreements to take monthly issues of "Volunteer Opportunities" for the duration of the project, speaking engagements, a luncheon for employees who volunteered to act as couriers to distribute materials to their colleagues, recruitment tables at three locations and many requests for pre-retirement information.

During phase two, the bank campaign, the eight of the nine largest of the fourteen banks and trust companies, plus one small trust company attended the breakfast. All but one agreed to participate in the program in follow-up phone calls.

In phase three, the direct mail campaign, 154 companies were contacted. Of these, 5 responded on their own requesting promotional materials. Follow-up phone calls were then begun with the remaining companies. An additional 20 agreed to take part, 6 refused and 2 have indicated interest but have as yet not finalized any plans. This gives a positive response rate after follow-up excluding those not finalized, of eighty per cent.

A. PROMOTION STATISTICS

Posters distributed	275
Table Tents distributed	500
Pamphlets distributed	35,000
Articles in magazines/newspapers	8
Television interviews	2
Television advertisements	92
Workplaces posting or reprinting "Volunteer Opportunities".....	.8
Issues of "Volunteer Opportunities" circulated/month	220

B. WORKPLACE STATISTICSB.1 Type of Employer Contact**Stage One - Large Companies - Personal Calls**

# of employers approached	15
# of employers agreeing to participate	15

Stage Two - Banks & Trust Companies - Information Breakfast

# invited to Bankers' Breakfast	14
# attending Bankers' Breakfast	8
# participating in program	7

Stage Three - Medium & Small Companies - Direct Mail

# receiving Direct Mail Package	154
# responding with no follow-up	5
# receiving follow-up phone-calls	32
# participating in program	24

B.2 Level of Employer Response and Number of Employees Reached

<u>Level of Response</u>	<u># of Companies</u>	<u># of Employees</u>
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Level One

Poster only or poster with pamphlet pocket	4	3,150
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Level Two

Poster with pamphlet pocket plus other publicity (bulletin board display or newsletter article)	2	11,000
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Level Three

Posters plus pamphlets direct to all employees	31	10,430
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Level Four

Posters, pamphlets direct to all employees plus newsletter article and/or "Volunteer Opportunities"...	3	16,475
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Level Five

Posters, pamphlets direct to all employees plus staffed information table and display	3	6,500
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<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>47,555</u>
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B.3 Number of New Volunteers

# responding through mail-in card	25
# contacted at information table	9
# number phone or coming in person to the VAC	78

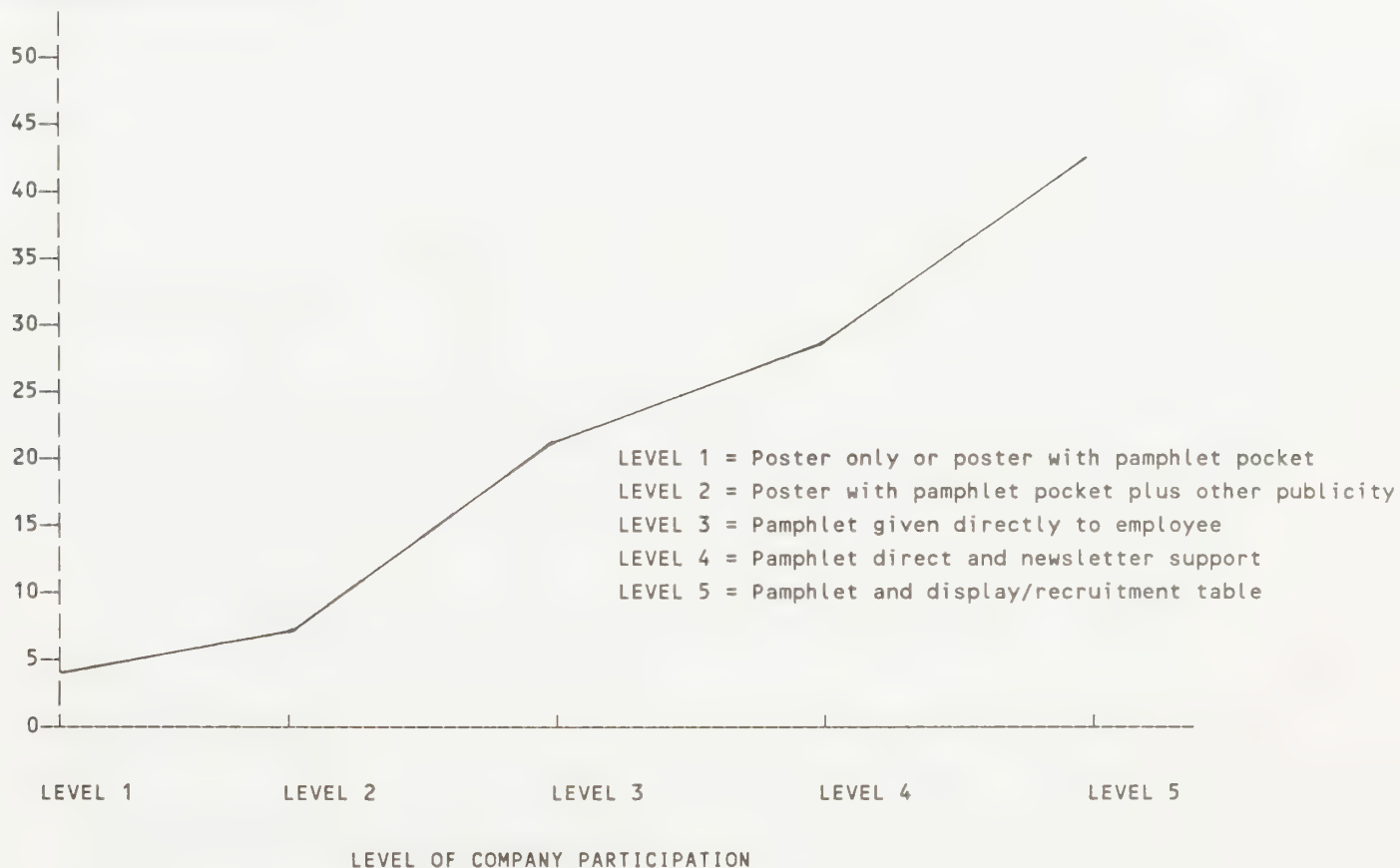
<u>TOTAL TO DATE</u>	<u>112</u>
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In addition there are two groups of people who acted as volunteers directly for the project. Ten people, nine advisory committee members and one person who helped to do follow-up phone calls gave approximate 200 hours of their time.

Within the workplaces themselves, approximately 150 people gave anywhere from one hour to ten hours, depending on the task totalling a conservative estimate for the two groups of 500 hours of volunteer work.

B.4 Number of Volunteers in Relation to Level of Company Involvement

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED



Clearly the extent to which a company decided to participate in the project influenced the numbers of employees who acted on the information they received about volunteering.

V. CONCLUSIONS

THE NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS

The original needs assessment done by OAVB/C indicated a sharply rising demand for volunteers. Despite the strong competition for peoples' leisure time, the time restraints of double income and single parent families, and therefore the dwindling pool of potential volunteer hours available to be tapped, volunteer bureaux and centres are managing to show marginal increases in their recruitment each year.

In contrast, in Hamilton the demand for volunteers grew by 233% over a four year time period ending in 1986.

However, demand is outstripping supply. Some of the contributing factors are a growing number of services responding to societal needs plus cutbacks by government in service delivery. Heavier demands are therefore being placed on donations of both time and money.

TARGET MARKETING AS ONE SOLUTION

The Ministry of Citizenship and Culture grant was offered to address the critical need for funding of volunteer bureaux and centres. It was decided to use the money to test workplace recruitment, a market which has gone largely untapped in Canada but is highly successful in the United States.

The project was, by all standards, an unqualified success.

A success rate of 100% of the large companies approached in person during the first stage of the campaign simply cannot be beaten. The response rate of the banking sector and the direct mail campaign was also outstanding. We can say with assurance that additional staff and/or a longer time line would have resulted in an even higher participation rate by the Hamilton business sector.

In addition, the generosity of the participants in donating staff time, company resources and reimbursement for materials used, often at the company's own suggestion, indicates a tremendous amount of corporate support. In fact, two significant offers made by companies had to be turned down because of the limits on project resources.

Hamilton has a large and varied multicultural community and one large manufacturer, whose workforce is 60% non-English speaking, wanted to help provide resources for the translation of the materials into the major languages of its employees. They were willing to absorb a great deal of the cost and donate a significant amount of staff time. However, the extra expense incurred by the Voluntary Action Centre plus the drain on the co-ordinator's time and the projected need for specialized placement assistance and development made it impossible for us to accept the offer at this time.

Thus the opportunity not only to attract new volunteers but also to begin an in-depth integration of the multicultural community into the general voluntary sector was lost.

A second offer by a major bank to distribute 75,000 pieces of specially printed promotional materials through statements mailed out to its customers had to be turned down because of printing costs. In order to take advantage of this offer, we would have had to produce a promotional piece no larger than a cheque. We decided on a "blank cheque" for donating time rather than money and designed some rough art which was enthusiastically received by the bank. However, their donations committee regulations permitted them to incur the costs of stuffing and mailing but not the cost of printing.

The number of potential volunteers coming through the VAC as a result of the project will not close the gap between supply and demand. However, the literature search conducted at the beginning of the study indicated that a very low response rate should be expected in the first year of such a project. By any standards, the number of new recruits meets, and possibly exceeds, reasonable expectations for a one year project in which front-end development-related expenses and resource demands were necessarily high.

Analysis of the response rate of volunteers in relation to the extent to which their respective employers participated in the project reveals a direct relationship. That is, the more a company agreed to do, the greater the numbers of their employees who contacted the Voluntary Action Centre to inquire about getting involved. This may suggest that future projects of this sort concentrate efforts with a smaller number of companies, aiming to maximize the participation level of each.

In addition, the marketing strategy evaluation gained through participation in a Marketing Course at McMaster University provided invaluable information.

Despite the fact that volunteerism is a critical economic and social movement in this country, relatively little is known about it. The data recently collected by Statistics Canada for the Department of the Secretary of State will undoubtedly add to our understanding of who volunteers. But from a marketing perspective we continue to operate in a void.

Many volunteer bureaux and centres in Ontario have been utilizing the "Volunteering - A Great Way to Grow" theme to promote volunteering. We do not know, however, if this is the right kind of message to effectively recruit volunteers. In this project it was decided to take a different approach. Instead of talking about what volunteering can give to the volunteer (growth), we concentrated our theme on how much volunteers are needed ("You Have What They Need").

It is not well understood what kind of message will generate the greatest number of new volunteers. Those who are engaged in recruitment and the promotion of volunteerism continue to operate in a void. A substantive study of volunteer motivation and marketing is critical if we are to recruit the numbers of volunteers needed in our communities.

We are at the beginning of a growth curve in this particular target market with a lot of untapped potential. We have barely skimmed the surface of what is possible.

The undeniable conclusion both of those connected to the project at the VAC and of business community members asked to comment on the project is that it has been an unqualified success. The greatest concern voiced by business and some of the new volunteers contacted by the project is that if something is not done fairly soon to continue working with this target market, the momentum will be lost. Much of the groundwork that has been done will have to be repeated in order to recapture the enthusiasm sparked by the project.

THE PUBLIC EDUCATION FACTOR

The literature indicated that the first year would be largely spent in public education. This turned out to be true.

The Voluntary Action Centre is a not-for-profit agency competing for profile in the business community along with hundreds of other agencies. Only one or two companies knew who we were and why we existed. None were aware of the urgency of the need for volunteers. Few were aware of the extent of the potential benefits of supporting volunteerism within their companies or to their employees. None were aware of the economic value of the voluntary sector. In fact, this information alone virtually sold the project to everyone involved. None were aware of how easy it is to contribute and how small the cost to them would be. It was this fact, in many cases, that made them go the extra mile and offer even more than they were being asked.

A disturbing lack of knowledge was discovered through all employee levels about the extent to which the human service delivery system is charitably funded and volunteer-based. There is a naive assumption that the government is taking responsibility for a wide variety of special needs and crisis intervention services for the elderly, disabled, victims of abuse psychiatric patients and so on.

In fact, many of our support systems would disappear if it were not for charitable donations and volunteer hours. Even our education and health care systems and our recreation and cultural facilities are heavily dependent on volunteers.

When people are asked to begin estimating the extent to which their families are helped directly or indirectly through volunteer work they are astounded. Children in sports leagues or receiving one-to-one tutoring at school, new Canadians taking English as a second language, elderly people in homes or institutions who need special care, families in crisis or with special needs members, people who attend concerts, museums or art galleries - these all absorb the benefits of hundreds of hours of volunteer work.

The ignorance concerning the nature and significance of the voluntary sector is contributing to a naive reliance on services which are on unstable ground. If people not only want the broad range of services which are now available but also want them extended and improved, they must make a personal contribution. The anecdotal evidence from the project indicates that when people are made aware of the realities of the voluntary sector and how they can make a contribution that will suit their own needs and

limitations, they respond very positively. It is therefore imperative that we begin dispelling the myth that the government can do it all.

Even with much higher taxation, our resources would still be finite. We couldn't pay for everything.

And even if we could, the question remains, would we want to? The evidence is mounting that people in a high technology society have increasing needs for touch and personal contact. If we choose to become a "kept" society, relying on governments to provide for all our needs, we pay heavily, not only in dollars but also in alienation. There is a humanizing factor in people choosing to give their time, talents, resources and personal caring simply for their own growth and sense of self-fulfillment that cannot be bought with money.

THE CASE FOR GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Even a cursory perusal of the literature makes it clear that we have not begun to tap the resources of large and small business.

In the U.S. the corporate sector has learned that not only does it have much to give, it has even more to gain. "Workplaces have largely replaced the family, the church and the community as the central institution of society."⁴ Companies which take on community projects or offer their employees recognition and opportunities to meet needs which cannot be met on the job, see a tremendous boost in employee morale, productivity and reduced absenteeism.

The sense of family created by these joint activities has a direct relation to the bottom line of the company ledger. When the economic growth rate slowed to 3%, companies with well-run employee volunteer programs were reporting growth rates of up to thirty per cent.

But even though volunteers do not work for pay, volunteers, volunteerism and volunteer programs are not free. Volunteers need recruitment, placement, trained co-ordinators of volunteers (we wouldn't put people on assembly lines or in office pools and not give them a supervision) and training for the job. A volunteer job is worthless at best and harmful at worst if it is not performed properly. None of these services are free.

Why is the U.S. corporate involvement so successful? Because the government injects millions of dollars into it. By supporting the involvement of large and small business in volunteerism, it is injecting all of the creative, financial, managerial, marketing and decision-making skills of successful business people into solving community problems.

The volunteers in turn inject billions of dollars worth of community service into the economy. If we are looking for purely economic reasons, its one of the best bargains going. Even taking care to listen and respond to the needs of the labour movement, volunteerism makes good economic sense.

⁴ Cynthia Vizza, Kenn Allen and Shirley Keller, A New Competitive Edge: Volunteers from the Workplace, VOLUNTEER - The National Centre, Arlington, Virginia, 1986, p.16.

Although largely untried in Canada, workplace recruitment appears, from this small pilot project, to have great potential here. Further, this project provides a perfect illustration of the potential for inter-sector partnerships in community development.

A voluntary agency with government support, solicited and received corporate investment and commitment and turned it all back into the community. No sector alone can guarantee the services upon which we have come to depend but corporate and voluntary sector and government partnerships can work - if the initial investment is available to stimulate the action.

SH/LLG/DA. October, 1988.
VGCASE6.1

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V11. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Voluntary Action Centre Policy and Practices
Regarding Unions. An Excerpt From Voluntary Action
Centre Policy and Practices Manual

APPENDIX B Endorsements - Mayor of Hamilton

- Regional Chairman
- President - The Hamilton and
District Chamber of Commerce

APPENDIX C

- Poster
- Pamphlet
- Table Tent
- Button

APPENDIX D Employer Kit - "Benefits of Volunteerism"

- "Economic Dimensions of Volunteer
Activity In Canada"
- "Ways In Which Companies Can
Participate In Volunteer Greater
Hamilton"

PLEASE NOTE: These appendices are offered as a separate package. If they
are not included with the copy of the report you have, you
can obtain them for a cost of \$4.00 from the Voluntary Action
Centre of Hamilton and District.

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